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## **36<sup>th</sup>-ish\* Annual Smithfield Ham & Yam Festival Set for May 7**

**SMITHFIELD, NC** – The Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation is pleased to announce that the 36<sup>th</sup>-ish\* annual Ham & Yam Festival presented by Stevens Sausage and Agri Supply will be held on Saturday, May 7. After three long years, this beloved community event that features tasty ham and yam foods, entertainment on three stages, a variety of vendors, kids' activities, and fun for the entire family will make its return.

“We are excited to bring the Ham & Yam Festival back this year! It’s a beloved Smithfield tradition, and we have heard how much people have missed it,” stated Sarah Edwards, festival organizer and Executive Director of the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation. “Festivalgoers’ first Ham & Yam memories are often of things like having fun in the children’s area, enjoying a country ham biscuit, getting their faces painted, entering their artistic sweet potato creations in the What’s That Yam Thing? contest, or performing as part of a school group on one of the stages.”

In addition to the Ham & Yam traditions, the committee has added some new components to the festival. New this year is the “Best of Ham & Yam” contest, which will recognize one food vendor or Downtown Smithfield restaurant for having the best ham and yam food after a popular vote and a judges’ vote. Information about the entrants and their offerings will be available soon on the festival website: [www.hamandyam.com](http://www.hamandyam.com).

The festival will be headlined by performances from Paige King Johnson at 2:30pm and The Original Rhondels at 4:30pm on the Got to Be NC Stage at the Agri Supply – Stevens Sausage Pavilion on Front Street.

Country music singer-songwriter Paige King Johnson is a newcomer to the country charts, where she had a Top 30 single with “Water Down the Whiskey.” The 23-year-old is a three-time Carolina Music Awards winner, and has opened for James Otto, Neal McCoy, and Scotty McCreery; she is also the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Musical Ambassador for their “Got to Be NC”

campaign.

The Original Rhondels are a beach music tradition that has been entertaining since 1969. With three Top 10 hits in “May I,” “I’ve Been Hurt,” and “What Kind of Fool Do You Think I Am,” the band delights audiences that sing and dance along to some of the best party and dance songs from the past fifty years.

The Ham & Yam Festival is organized by the nonprofit Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation. To learn more about the Ham & Yam Festival, including sponsorship and vendor opportunities, please visit [www.hamandyam.com](http://www.hamandyam.com), or call Sarah Edwards at 919-934-0887.

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